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SECRET

WJA-951

24 July 54

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HOSTIL

HOSTIL obtained this report from Andranik Bakorjian, an Armenian employee of UNRWA Headquarters, Amman. Bakorjian obtained the information from the priest Aslanian. Bakorjian has offered to arrange an introduction to Aslanian for HOSTIL.

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SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3828
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2005

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Answers to questions No
Armenians' Trip Given

W-953

June 1954

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1. Which Armenian priests from Jerusalem attended the funeral of George VI in Soviet Armenia?
ans. A. Father Hovhannesian
B. Father Hovhannesian Abrahamian
2. What are the clerical positions of these two priests?
ans. Hovhannesian is Archbishop. Abrahamian is Chief of State and also head of the Armenian Patriarchate. Ordinary in Jerusalem.
3. Why were these two priests selected and not any others?
ans. These were the only two who obtained visas to Soviet Armenia.
4. From whom did they receive the visas?
ans. The Soviet Legation in Beirut.
5. What route did the priests follow on the trip?
ans. Beirut, Rome, Zurich, Vienna, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow.
6. Did they encounter any difficulties during their travels?
ans. Allied authorities in Vienna attempted to delay them but they telephoned the Soviet authorities in Vienna. The Soviets sent a car which picked up the two priests and delivered them to the Soviet zone.
7. Were they met by any authorities at any other airports during their trip?

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- ans. They were not given any official receptions except at the airport at Erivan where they were met by representatives of both the Armenian outside church and the government of the USSR.
8. How long did they remain in Armenia and where did they stay?
- ans. They stayed for 17 days at the Pyramid Hotel in Erivan.
9. Were they given any money?
- ans. Each of them received 2,000 rubles for incidental expenses and were told that they could receive more if they needed it.
10. What high ranking persons did they meet?
- ans. Tolanian met the Minister of Religious Affairs of the USSR, and was later called in 3 times to meet with the Minister of Religious Affairs of the entire USSR.
11. What did they discuss?
- ans. They discussed the situation of the church outside Armenia and also the question of the repatriation of the Armenian diaspora. Further Tolanian asked the Ministers why the Soviet authorities stopped repatriation. The Ministers replied that it was considered best for the Armenians at that time. The Ministers also stated however, that the repatriation process could begin again soon.
12. Did anyone from Lebanon and Syria make the trip?
- ans. Bishop Sheron of Antelias and Bishop Sarkis of Aleppo were invited but they refused to go. Tolanian tried to persuade the two bishops to attend in view that they should see for

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themselves the situation in Armenia. Both bishops are
Tatnags, however, and have the right in the USSR and
as talanian failed. Father Shavukh Kopyoujian of
Dongos attended.

13. Did they meet any Armenians who had emigrated from here?
ans. Yes. They met some Armenians who had returned from Armenia
from the Arab world. These Armenians appeared to be
"satisfied" with their new life.
14. Were there any restrictions on the movements of the priests in
Armenia?
ans. They were free to go where they pleased except in the
military zone of the Turkish border zone.
15. Who are talanian's associates in Jerusalem?
ans. talanian associates with men of course of common nature.
He is very friendly with the politician Uriah Kopyoujian who
supplies him with alcohol and is his gambling companion.

REMARKS:

From the Soviet zone of Vienna, the priests were flown by a
special plane to Moscow via Kiev and Rostov - from Moscow to
Jerusalem they were flown in a special plane from the USSR which
was piloted by Armenians.

Field Note:

See cover sheet.

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